

Claims:

Claim 1. A method for the detection of an altered state in a system containing a liquid medium and a sensing device, said method comprising:

establishing a normal temperature of said sensing device;

detecting a change in the temperature of said sensing device;

comparing said change in temperature with said normal temperature; and

generating a signal to advise that said change in temperature exceeds a predetermined threshold, said signal indicating that the existence of an altered state is likely.

Claim 2. The method according to claim 1 wherein the altered state is a physical change.

Claim 3. The method according to claim 1 wherein the altered state is a chemical change.

Claim 4. The method according to claim 1 wherein the altered state is the accumulation of scale.

Claim 5. The method according to claim 1 wherein the altered state is a reduction in the quantity of liquid medium.

Claim 6. The method according to claim 1 wherein the altered state is the discoloration of the liquid medium.

Claim 7. The method according to claim 1 wherein the system is a dishwasher.

Claim 8. The method according to claim 1 wherein the system is a water heater.

Claim 9. The method according to claim 1 wherein the system is a boiler.

Claim 10. A device for the detection of an altered state in a system containing a liquid medium, said device comprising: a tube housing a heating means to establish and

maintain the internal temperature of said tube; a temperature sensing means to monitor and detect changes in temperatures within the tube; and, a signal means to provide a signal indicating a temperature increase within the tube thereby alerting of the existence of an altered state.

Claim 11. The device according to claim 10 wherein the system containing a liquid medium is a dishwasher.

Claim 12. The device according to claim 10 wherein the system is a water heater.

Claim 13. The device according to claim 10 wherein the system is a boiler.

Claim 14. The device according to claim 10 wherein the altered state is the accumulation of scale.